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will rush at man, emitting a fierce hissing sound like a cobra. It can move very fast when in flight. It is the great enemy of the dhub lizard, which it attacks at sight, and three times out of four defeats and kills it after a battle of giants. K 136 SA 136

The wurral's bite is said by all the Badawins to be poisonous, but it only occasionally kills a human being. Its bite causes great pain, and a person bitten gets no relief "either from shade or sun" (to use a Badawin expression). The wurral is considered unclean and is not eaten, it is rather preserved because it rids the neighbourhood of snakes. The wurral feeds on grass (*'ashib*), snakes and insects, and like the dhub is very fond of locusts. [B 262]

In 1933, during the flight of a swarm of locusts west of Jahrah near Al Atraf, I saw five wurral and three dhubs, all full sized, madly rushing about and jumping into the air catching the flying insects. I was in a car with my wife, and we stopped and watched them for twenty minutes, at a distance of less than fifty yards. In their excitement they forgot all about fear of the car and human beings.

The wurral is sandy coloured and has a long, powerful but smooth tail, salmon coloured but verging into scarlet near the tip. Round the tail is a series of dark rings. It has a cream belly, and possesses no scales.

After the dhub, the wurral's chief enemy is the snake, non-poisonous or poisonous, which it eats. If bitten by a poisonous snake, it is said straightway to go off to the *ramrâm* bush, and roll itself well in the bush and eat some of the leaves. This is said by the Badawin to act as an antidote to the snake's poison. In any case, the wurral apparently comes to no harm if bitten by the most poisonous of snakes. From watching the wurral's methods and its ability to escape the consequences of the snake's poison by eating and rolling in the *ramrâm* bush, the Badawin has learned to value the *ramrâm* as an anti-snake medicine, apparently with satisfactory results. The *ramrâm* is the *Heliotropium cignosum* of the botanist. [B 152]

THE DHUB, OR SPINE-TAILED MONITOR

This interesting lizard is known by its snub-nosed head, and ... massive tail covered with horny spikes, which forms its main defensive weapon.

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Attitude to Sickness

Drinking muddy water or infected water is another cause, especially among those who go off to the Haj. It is pitiful to see the numbers of men and women who return from the Pilgrimage with dysentery, colitis, and so forth. 757 164

Constipation, of course, is very common.

It must be clearly understood that only the fringe of this interesting subject has been touched upon, but enough, I hope, to show that the most crying of all needs in Arabia to-day, and especially among the Badawin, is good medical attention, hospitals in cities and travelling motor clinics, which can move about among the nomad population and treat them in their homes. The medical branch of the American mission (Dutch Reformed Church) for long established in the Persian Gulf, has done wonders, but much, much more is required.

One of the most interesting features of the Badawin's attitude towards sickness, and especially wounds and sores, is his firm belief that certain pleasant smells or scents have a directly harmful effect on the progress towards recovery. It is in consequence a common sight to see Badawins entering the town of Kuwait, etc., with their nostrils stuffed up with dirty pieces of rag, inserted in the form of "plugs". A sufferer religiously keeps these in his nose until such time as he can escape out of the town again. The "smell of a woman", as he calls it, is a particularly dangerous form of scent to a wound, etc. 751 753

If a man is recovering from smallpox, on the other hand, it is believed that certain human smells, and certain foods, have a highly beneficial effect on the convalescent. He does not, however, know what this food is, or what particular person's odour will help him, so he goes out to receive visits of all the women in the neighbourhood, and is given every possible change of diet, in the fond hope that he will accidentally light on the right thing to effect a cure. This treatment was tried for Nazzal al Rashidi's illness in 1932. 751 757

In my various wanderings among the Badawin, I have always carried a few common medicines, notably of a purgative kind. These have always proved useful. Aspirin too I have found invaluable. As strange though it may seem sun-headaches appear to be fairly common among tribal folk, especially among the women.

Simple Fractures are dealt with fairly satisfactorily by the Badawin. He understands the use of splints, and usually before putting the 752

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752 splints on he packs the broken limb with a concoction of barley flower, salt and eggs. After the expiration of some twenty-five days the bandage is loosened and the splints removed. Whilst the bone is setting the patient feeds on *leben* (sour milk) or camel's milk only. He must not eat dates or sweet things. He must also plug up both nostrils.

Wounds.—A small wound is known as a *sawfi*.
A bad or large one is known as a *jerah*.
A wounded man is known as a *sawfi*.

As related above, certain scents (*rihe*) or smells harm the wound, and open it up again. A man, therefore, who is suffering from a wound or broken bone is always placed on the windward side of the tent, and he must keep his nostrils plugged up. As with fractures, sweet dishes and food must be avoided, otherwise the wound will fester. Particularly harmful is the close approach of a man who has had sexual intercourse and has not as yet had time to wash himself. Similarly, a menstruous woman is a danger. Both are unclean, *najis*, and so are harmful.

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Certain smells are not considered harmful, such are:

(*a*) Smoke from burning camel manure (*jelle*), used universally when making coffee.
(*β*) Tobacco smoke.
(*c*) Smell of the tar concoction they put on camels for mange (*jerad*).
(*d*) The smell of roasting coffee and food generally.

In peaceful times the urine of small children is sometimes applied to wounds, as a sort of antiseptic wash. On a *ghazzu* or raid, the companions of a wounded man will wash his wounds with their own urine for the same reason. But to gain the best results it must be urine of young heroes, not of elderly men.

[576] The wounded man is greeted with such expressions as, *Allah i sal'amak—Allah yikfi'ak a sharr an ak—Allah yunik al a'afiak*, etc.

Snake Bites.—When a person is bitten by a snake which is known to be poisonous the following precautions must be immediately taken:

(i) The spot bitten must be deeply cut with a knife and blood made to flow.
(ii) Two tourniquets must be applied to the limb (arm or leg) above where the snake has bitten the person.

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752 (3) A sheep must be slain at once and the whole of the wounded limb must be wrapped in the skin of the sheep whilst still warm. Better still, if the person can wrap his whole body in the skin. This is to make him or her perspire thoroughly. If the weather is cold and sweat comes slowly, the patient is made to lie down and two fires are lit close on either side.

(4) The patient is given tea from the *ramrâm* plant, if available, and the actual spot where the bite shows is covered with *ramrâm* paste.

Care must be taken to prevent the bitten person from sleeping, and for twenty-four hours he must be kept awake at all costs. After twenty-four hours the skin is removed, but the tourniquets are kept on night and day, in spite of the agony and swelling of the limbs, for twenty days.

A woman of the Rashaida tribe, from Qatar, who was bitten by a cobra on the ankle, told me that she underwent the above treatment, and that eventually her foot swelled to such an extent that it burst (her expression) at the instep, and black pussy liquid in very large quantities flowed away. That was considered to be the snake poison leaving her, but it was more probably gangrenous pus which had accumulated as a result of stopping the blood circulation.

Among the Diyahin tribe, a sept of the Mutair (Braih), I knew another woman, Nura Um Mubarak (a relation of Hillal al Mutairi), who had survived three bites from the horned viper. She underwent the same treatment each time.

CURING SORE EYES

757 Rifa'a, the wife of Shaikh Thuwairan abu Sifra of the Rukhman section of the Mutair, told me the following on 24th April, 1937, in course of general conversation. For ordinary sore eyes caused by flies and dirt generally the best cure was:

(1) In case of a child, for the mother or another woman to put a few drops of her milk daily in the child's eyes. This soothed and had a definitely curative effect.

757 784 (2) In case of a man, the same thing applied, but it must never be the milk of his own wife. That was sinful and results would be worse than the cure. Another woman's milk was necessary.

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CHAPTER XLIV

Curious Customs and Stories

MAD DOG BITE

752 826 If a person is bitten by a dog suffering from rabies, he must immediately find a man of the Birzan section of the Mutair, and drink a coffee-cup full of his blood (which he pays for). The blood of a Birzani so taken is regarded among all the tribes of North-East Arabia as an infallible cure.

Authority, Shaikh of Kuwait, 11th August, 1932. Confirmed by the Shaikh of the Birzan, the late 'Ali al Shuwairibat, in 1935

DIVISION OF SPOIL, GIFTS, ETC.

425 Among the Badawin the method adopted for the just division of spoil is to send one person some distance away, so that he cannot see what article is selected. Another will then call out "Who shall have this?" holding up or pointing at a particular article. The man must then in reply name one of the party. This custom has religious or *Shari'ah* sanction behind it.

Authority, Shaikh of Kuwait, 11th August, 1932.

MAKING DECISIONS

787 To decide whether a journey or other enterprise shall be undertaken, the counting of beads (odd or even) three times, is common among the Shi'ahs.

Among the Badawin the following method is adopted: A man will shut his eyes and hold his hands out in front of him, palms towards him, and fingers of the two hands pointing toward each other. He will then try slowly and with his eyes shut to bring the fingers together, so as to make the tip of the centre finger of one hand *exactly*